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File: USPT

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TITLE: Method and apparatus for redirecting a user to a new location on the world wide web using relative universal resource locators

Detailed Description Text (10):

If a determination is made in step 220 that the user is operating on a user station 102a that connected to OLS 140 through WWW 120, then processing proceeds to step 230 where enrollment means 145 determines a co-marketer identification symbol or code (CM ID) associated with the user station 102a. In this step, the complete destination URL which was passed to OLS web server 142 when the user was directed from a co-marketer site 122a, 122b, 122c to OLS site 128 is retrieved by OLS web server 142, and the second portion of the destination URL, which contains both a UNIX symbolic link and a destination filename (which may be specified implicitly), is then extracted from the complete destination URL. As mentioned above, the UNIX symbolic link embedded in the destination URL uniquely identifies a co-marketer which directed the user from its WWW site to OLS site 128. Next, in step 240, enrollment means 145 attempts to enroll the user in OLS 140. In this step, the enrollment means 145 obtains a co-marketer identification code (CMID) associated with the destination URL using look-up table 300 (shown in FIG. 3). For each valid co-marketer in system 100, table 300 has one or more entries representing the second portion of a potential destination URL that might be generated by such a co-marketer. Thus, each entry in table 300 has a record 310 representing a UNIX symbolic link (310a) and destination filename (310b) that may be provided by a valid co-marketer, and a corresponding record 320 representing a CMID associated with the co-marketer assigned to UNIX symbolic link 310a in system 100. If the second portion of the destination URL is not recognized as corresponding to a valid CMID, the enrollment session is terminated. A list of valid (or authorized) CMID's is preferably stored in a Co-Marketer Information Directory Table on enrollment database 146 shown in FIG. 4. The Co-Marketer Information Directory Table on enrollment database 146 is formed of a plurality of individual records 440, each of which contains a field 442 for storing the CMID of a system authorized co-marketer.

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